

CSCE NEWS RELEASE

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

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“Don’t Allow Moscow to Dictate NATO Enlargement” Helsinki Commission Warns Clinton

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Washington, DC—Today the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, also known as the Helsinki Commission, released the text of a letter sent to President Clinton last week regarding the Commission’s concerns over the upcoming Summit with Russian President Boris Yeltsin. Specifically the letter: 1) cautioned President Clinton not to allow Russia to dictate the terms for the expansion of NATO, either formally or by implication; 2) urged the President to get reaffirmation from President Yeltsin of Russia’s rejection of developing any sphere of influence, specifically regarding Ukrainian sovereignty and her control of the port city of Sevastopol; and 3) reminded the President of U.S. support for the full withdrawal of all Russian troops from Moldova under the Russia-Moldova agreement of 1994. The letter was signed by Commission Chairman Senator Alfonse D’Amato (R-C-NY) and Co-Chairman Representative Christopher H. Smith (R-NJ).

The full text of the letter follows:

“In anticipation of your upcoming summit meeting with Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin, we urge you to consider several issues as you prepare for these important discussions. Your travels to the Finnish capital are a reminder of the monumental changes that have occurred in Europe since the 1975 signing of the Helsinki Final Act as well as the continuing challenges in building a truly united and democratic Europe.

“While we strongly support the timely enlargement of NATO as part of this process, we remain concerned that reason and realism be exercised in efforts undertaken by the administration to forge ahead with some form of formal partnership between Russia and NATO. The killing fields of Chech-

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The Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe by law monitors and encourages progress in implementing the provisions of the Helsinki Accords. The Commission, created in 1976, is made up of nine Senators, nine Representatives and one official each from the Departments of State, Commerce and Defense. For more information about the Commission, please call (202) 225-1901.

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nya should serve as a stark reminder of the limits on democracy and human rights in Russia. President Yeltsin is ultimately responsible for the Russian military operations that laid waste to Grozny, leveled scores of towns and villages, led to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Chechen and Russian civilians, and resulted in tens of thousands of deaths.

“The single greatest contribution Russia can make to the construction of an integrated and democratic Europe would be to consolidate democracy, human rights and rule of law at home.

“We cannot ignore the historical relationship between Russia and her neighbors, many of whom have understandable concerns for their sovereignty and independence, given decades of brutal domination and suppression by Moscow. Such apprehension can only be heightened by the current leadership crisis in the Kremlin and neo-imperialist statements made by certain prominent Russian political figures. Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov, a key interlocutor on NATO issues, has been one of the chief proponents of the re-establishment of a Russian sphere of influence in the Newly Independent States of the former Soviet Union.

“Mr. President, while we cannot ignore legitimate Russian security concerns as NATO proceeds with the admission of new states, neither can we allow Moscow to dictate the terms of enlargement or which states might be admitted. While the United States should continue to encourage cooperation among countries in the Baltic region, it is important to keep in mind that such cooperation cannot preclude NATO membership for Estonia, Latvia, or Lithuania.

“Talks on a possible formal charter between NATO and Russia should clearly address the following points. First, the Russian Federation must not be given a veto, or implied veto, over the timing or conditions for the admission of new members into the Alliance. Second, such an accord must firmly oppose any moves by Moscow to establish ‘spheres of influence’ in East Central Europe. Third, the charter must in no way impede the development of enhanced relations between NATO and non-members, such as Ukraine.

“With Ukraine in mind, we wish to express our growing concern over a series of disturbing Russian actions relating to the Ukrainian port of Sevastopol. Challenges to Ukrainian sovereignty over Sevastopol continue despite the 1995 agreement signed by the Presidents of Ukraine and Russia on the principles for dividing the Black Sea Fleet headquartered on the Crimean peninsula. In December, the Federation Council of the Russian Parliament overwhelmingly approved a resolution claiming the port as part of Russian territory, and condemning Ukraine’s refusal to recognize Sevastopol’s ‘Russian status.’ A similar measure was adopted by the State Duma in October. More recently, Moscow Mayor Yurii Luzhkov traveled to Sevastopol, where he declared that ‘Sevastopol was and is a Russian city and we must defend Sevastopol’s right to be a Russian city.’

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“In the five years since independence, Kiev has endeavored to pursue improved relations with the Russian Federation based on sovereign equality. Threats to Ukraine’s sovereignty and independence, such as those described above, can only undermine this process with potentially destabilizing consequences.

“During your talks with President Yeltsin, we urge you to underscore unwavering U.S. support for Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity within internationally recognized borders, and to stress the importance of resolving all outstanding issues relating to the Black Sea Fleet and the port of Sevastopol in a manner consistent with OSCE principles, including respect for territorial integrity.

“Regarding this principle, we note that there has been some indication that Russia intends to withdraw at least part of its military forces from Moldova. Your administration has consistently and properly insisted that the October 21, 1994 withdrawal agreement between Moldova and Russia be observed. We hope you will continue to encourage President Yeltsin to this end.

“In closing, Mr. President, we wish you every success in Helsinki and may your work be guided by those principles so closely identified with that city.”